

### FUTURE TOPS OF AMERICA CHRISTOPHER GUDGEON

The country salutes you, Future Tops of America. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have reviewed the agenda and like what they see. The President signed an Executive Order; there'll be a pancake breakfast on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. And in every burgh and burrow—from Loring Park to Key West—mayors have commissioned gold keys, to unlock those ancient hearts, as good people—neighbors and friends—stand on tippy toes to catch a glimpse of this mighty army of men and angels. Everywhere, across the nation, people are waiting to see what you do next. Onward—unhurt, unhated—like Christian soldiers, marching as to war...

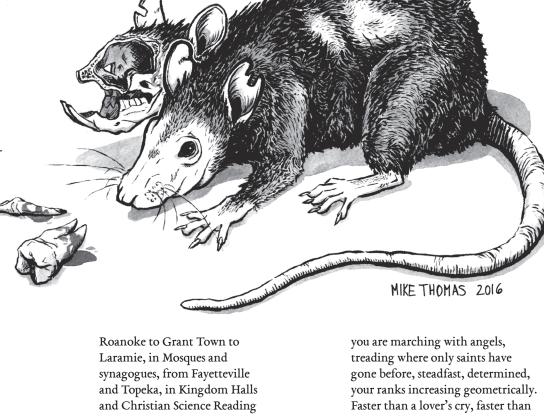
The route is set, Future Tops of America, for a ticker tape parade, up Chartres Street and down Orange Avenue, across the West Side Highway to the very end of the Centerville Turnpike—past the white-washed ranchers with Huck Finn fences; past the tire swing hung from the old oak tree, festooned now with pink and yellow ribbons; past the little brick chapel, still wet with Sunday prayers; past the junior high, where the marching band practices show tunes from the approved list—where a solitary boy lays in the cold, uncut grass, dreaming of tether ball and a Valentine kiss. Onward, little brother, child soldier for this fabulous Crusade, marching as to war, but not as to war, as to something even better . . .

Moms are baking,
Future Tops of America.
On every kitchen sill, from
Winnepago County to Wahneta,
apple pie and rhubarb Brown
Betty and every manner of
cobbler, crisp and crumble are
cooling in the afternoon shade.
Reverend Larson's organized a
box social in the park—
everyone's invited—and later
there's a potluck by the
Kenduskeag bridge. The Warren
boy will be there, Scotty Weaver,
Steven Charles, their bellies full of

bumbleberry coffee cake and whoopee pie, buttermilk biscuit and Tollhouse cookie. As the bonfire fades, you'll assemble in the town square to renew the glorious stomp, marchining everforward, because when you stand, you stand alone...

Everyone's joining in, Future Tops of America, faster than a hidden glance; you can feel the shift from Seattle to Central Park, from Montrose to Greenwich Village, and all along the Appalachian Trail. Domino's is focus-testing toys for the Junior Daddy JoyBox kid's meal (batteries not included) as Carl's Jr.'s launches the Future Tops Bases Loaded Breakfast Burger: three eggs—one sunny side up, one over easy, one completely scrambled—wedged with a slab of lean sausage between two pieces of dry toast. The Salvation Army called, Future Tops of America; they love the whole marching motif; it's something they can really get behind: a single force, freshfaced, steadfast, fueled by brotherhood and amyl nitrite, ready to get down to business, but never too busy to cuddle. Even the Boy Scouts are getting into the act, with patches for Transgender Studies and Edging, Voguing and Water Sports; you'll be prepared for anything in the America of the future, Future Tops of America. Onward Rebecca Wight, unhurt, unhated, as to war or something better! Onward Roxanne Ellis unhurt, unhated, as to war or something better! Onward Eddie Justice, unhurt, unhated, as to war or something better! They are lining the streets, brothers and sisters, waiting for you to pass, like Christian soldiers, marching as to war, but not to war. As to something even bigger than war, something even smaller than peace . . .

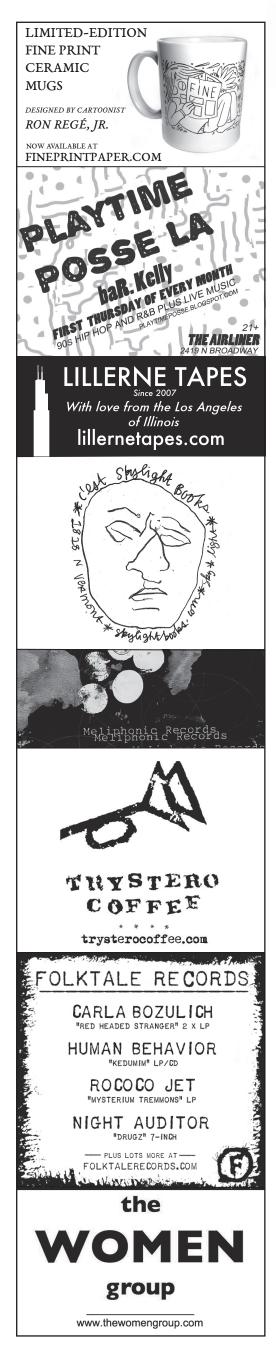
Jesus loves you,
Future Tops of America.
It's not a gay thing, He loves you as a person and thinks next time
He's in town you should Netflix and chill. In church halls and chapels across America, from



Rooms, in Shinto Shrines and even every ashram, ordinary folk, from Coconut Creek to Braxton, are on their knees, praying: God speed, Future Tops of America! Concerned Women are No Longer Concerned; abiding truths have given way to intemperate joy. General Hollis sent a heartshaped balloon, a dozen yellow roses and a handwritten note— "Love is not a sin, no matter how fleeting; crowns and thrones may perish, kingdoms rise and wane, but we shall never falter"—as everywhere, across the nation, good people, God-fearing men and women, are answering the call. Andy Gipson walks with you, Future Tops of America, John McTernan and Charles Worley - Onward! - a single force, one body, one mind, steadfast but never settled, because when we stand, we stand alone, but when we march, we march together...

There's a rhythm,
Future Tops of America,
a kind of music that masks the
crack of thunder and a distant
hiss; it's hypnotic, the thump of
the boot, the thump of pump.
You would dance if you could,
Future Tops of America—the
Hustle and The Funky Chicken,
Do-Si-Do and Grind—but the
music is inside you now, and
every heart beats as one, because

a mother's heart can break, your ranks are growing and growing. Spread the word Ricky Rius, let the syllables explode from your lips at 2,500 feet a second! Spread the word Simmie Williams, unhurt, unhated! Spread the word, August Provost, and hold your head high because everywhere, good Americans—mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers—are lining this and every street, waiting-quietly, patiently—for you to pass. Onward Brandon Teena, unhurt, unhated, marching as to war or something better! Onward Jason Mattison, unhurt, unhated, marching as to war or something better! Onward Daniel Fetty, unhurt, unhated, as to war or something better! Onward Paul Broussard! Onward Nireah Johnson! Ever onward, Future Tops Of America, marching as to war, but not as to war! As to peace, but not as to peace! As to something greater than war! Something greater than peace! Something not quite formed and as yet-unnamed. Something very nearly glorious! A kind of something that, in this moment as the crowd stands in silence, watching you pass—looks an awful lot like love ...



### NANT TO BE THE PILL YOU TAKE TO SLEEP AMANDA GLASSER

i eat falafel in my car, parked outside my house with my seatbelt still on. i worry that there's mayonnaise on it, and i feel like a jerk for being a vegan. i feel like a jerk about my pronouns. i write haikus in my head to ground myself during extreme moods; it's almost compulsive. i wrote a lot today, but i remember none of them. i remember them being better than what i'm writing now, but you know how memory works. your brain applies a filter, adjusts brightness, and then types out "#nofilter" before deleting the original. i am sweaty from the day, which included sex, which is unusual for me. this time, i didn't cry after. i have spots on me from the sweat because i have very sensitive skin. or because i am just dirty.

i won't make it out tonight. i probably won't shower before bed, either, even though i know this will let my sweat keep feeding the spots. they aren't cute, but they are technically alive, little colonies of yeast to keep me company while you can't or won't or whatever you said i probably wasn't listening well enough. mine are mostly between my breasts. you have them on your stomach, but they're not contagious and i'm just corny enough to say that if i were cornier i'd think it was a sign.

maybe in a few weeks you will come back, and then we will try to wash the spots away together. last time you were in my shower you had them and i didn't. i let you use a special shampoo that you need a prescription for. to get rid of spots that don't hurt anybody. it smells like sulfur, but the way sand smells like sulfur: it's not so bad. i liked that you felt better when i told you what the spots were and helped you take care of them. i like to comfort you. i'll have to take a pill to sleep tonight because i can't find my headphones. i want to be the pill you take to sleep.

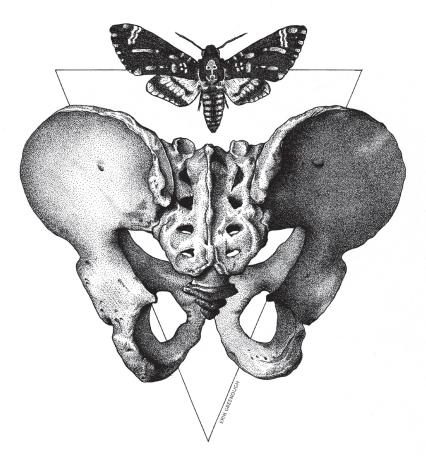
the headphones have been missing since wednesday and today is saturday. earlier, i slammed my fist on a café table and said—ok shouted—"where the fuck are my headphones," seemingly out of nowhere, but i was just trying to keep myself from saying something manipulative to keep you from leaving. cancer, scorpio moon, aquarius rising, bipolar, i feel your pain and so you feel obliged to feel mine. i feel guilty about this.

when i can't have what i want, i know i am an inconsolable child. except that at twenty-six, almost twenty-seven i am articulate and symmetrical and freckled by the sun and soft to touch....what i mean is that I usually get it eventually.

in the morning it will take me two hours to get out of bed after i wake up because i am afraid to leave my room alone. i'm not sure how good i feel in my room alone either. i'm not sure how good i feel anywhere. how good could i feel? can you show me?

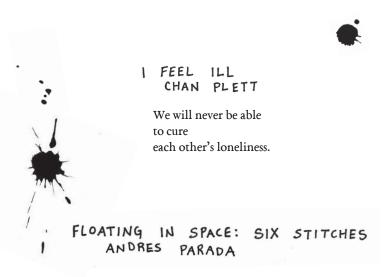
i blame my psychiatrist's new assistant for my recent loneliness, but it's at least half my fault. i need my meds, i hate my meds, i hate my needs.





everything is going so well "objectively;" at brunch at the restaurant where i am a server, my parents tell me how proud of me, and we can even talk about my eating disorder while we eat now. i guess i feel like a jerk about food a lot. i hate my need to consume anything. i feel like a jerk for being an artist with an expensive science degree. i feel like a jerk for being pretty, i feel like a jerk for turning you on. i wash down my falafel with gatorade and feel like a jerk about that, too, but when you leak saltwater all day, what else can you do?

my contacts dry up and stick to my eyes. i wish that when i took them out, i would automatically fall asleep. i wish that when i woke up and put them back in, all the decisions would be made and everything would be about the same every day from there on out. but, then again, that might be death. but, then again, this might be too.



I

My brother and I would sit outside with shaded grins, Dad's old astronaut headgear doing our grassy heads cool. Dad told us he used to go to the moon, but the truth is that he got our helmets in a swap: switched his heart for two genuine space heads in a trade with Crouch Rogovoy (a former Russian space hero who started selling ivory).

We found out where Dad got our space gear because one day, my bored Brother popped in the VHS with "GOLF 1994" scribbled on it. We watched 4 minutes of Dad squatting on a mattress, stretching his summer lips up to a naked astronaut's torso. And then, we watched 30 minutes of golf from the year 1994. And then, we watched it again, everyday.

I

Sometimes we'd get Johnny (an Australian Shepherd that Dad found on the moon) dressed to be Buggs Bunny as a girl: sticked lips and a brown dress. And then, we'd trick him into thinking we were veterinarians who were going to check his vagina for puppies. When we would find out he was a boy, my brother would slap his snout like a lady's fat ass.

Continued on page 6

# FEATURED ARTIST

Katrin Davis is a visual artist who grew up in Denver, Colorado. The daughter of two artists, she took to creating at an early age, which helped shape her career. In 2014, she moved to California where she now works as a graphic designer at BuzzFeed. Despite graphic design being the center point of her professional work, her passion for creating art and experimenting with different art forms keeps her constantly exploring new artistic ground. She has done everything from building dioramas to creating giant monster costumes out of felt. She also experiments with film and animation and even helped to storyboard and animate a music video for the Portland-based band Alameda. We sat down with her at our Los Angeles headquarters to talk about her creative process, her move to California, and the differences between creating work as part of a job versus doing it purely out of passion.

Can you talk a little about your decision to leave Denver and come to California and what that transition was like?

I had been wanting to live elsewhere for many years, but never had the guts or the right reason or timing to take off. I was pretty devastated when I was laid off from my design job in advertising in Denver, but it ended up being the impetus for a number of important changes in my life, including a move to California. Before my advertising job ended, I had been attending model train expos to look for miniature people and other tiny things for dioramas, which became an unexpected foot in the door to a design job at a model train company in Long Beach. I stayed there for over a year until I moved to Los Angeles for my current job at BuzzFeed, where I am primarily a graphic designer but also fill in the gaps creatively wherever I'm needed with animation, illustration, and some set/prop design. I've also been looking after my team's five pygmy hamsters. It's kind of a dream job.

When did you first get interested in making art?

My parents are artists, and I've always loved to make things—as a kid I liked to draw and sew. I was obsessive about doodling and having perfect handwriting.

Can you tell us a little bit about your parents and what sort of work they created?

My dad was a screen-printer for a while. He went to art school in Kansas City and became a painter. My mom is self-taught and she has instilled that same do-it-yourself spirit in me from the beginning. She has been involved in an ongoing comic book collaboration with a friend since grade school (they just celebrated their 50-year anniversary). She worked for a time making sample clothing for a fabric store and made crazy-elaborate cakes for weddings and birthdays too. She is just creative and hungry to learn in all walks of life. She has always encouraged me to experiment and take creative leaps, and I'm very thankful for that.

What was the first format you worked in?

Making elaborate covers for mix tapes as a teen got me into collage, which I later incorporated into show flyers. All of those things led me into graphic design, which has since become my day job. I still like to do a little bit of everything.

What are some of the differences you find between creating art as part of your day job and creating art on your own?

I love design work because it allows me to be creative within a set of parameters. Sometimes, in my own work, I struggle with narrowing down from a giant cloud of ideas and possibilities, so it's often a relief to have some of those variables taken away. It's also nice to have someone else negotiating pay and communicating with clients, which can be very challenging aspects of personal work.

Since creating is both your passion and profession, does it ever become difficult to create new work?

It's definitely a struggle. I feel very lucky to have a job in which creativity is celebrated (and required), but it does make it harder to find the drive to create at home. Still trying to work that one out.

Do you have a preferred medium to work in?

Drawing will always be my go-to, but my attention span is short and I love to experiment and find reasons to try out new techniques and learn new things. Until recently, I've been living in studio apartments and using my bed and the floor as my workspace. I've been lucky to find a place now that has a spare room/studio and can't wait to use all this space to start creating larger things.

As an artist who uses both physical and digital means for creating, what do you feel the benefits and drawbacks of each method are?

Making things digitally is less expensive, much faster, and far more forgiving, but the sense of craftsmanship and experimentation and closeness to the work that comes with making things by hand is something that I will always run to, given the choice. It opens you up to unexpected results and imperfections that may ultimately become the most interesting and wonderful parts of your work.

When I look at your work, I find myself in this environment that often brings a sort of science-fiction setting to mind. Is that intentional?

Yes and no. I'm a little obsessed with outer space and retrofuturism, but it's not something I set out specifically to create. Art is definitely a form of escape for me, so in a way I guess I'm often just constructing different environments I'd like to occupy.

Can you explain what creating art helps you escape from and how so?

When I was making dioramas nonstop, my life seemed to be falling apart from every angle. Creating tiny, dreamlike landscapes was a way to momentarily exist in those realms, to immerse my thoughts in possibility, and to steer away from the depression and anxiety and all of the things I wished to change about my life but couldn't. It can be a joyful escape during good times as well, but I find making art to be especially helpful at darker times as a way to express things that words cannot and disappear into (or away from) my mind.

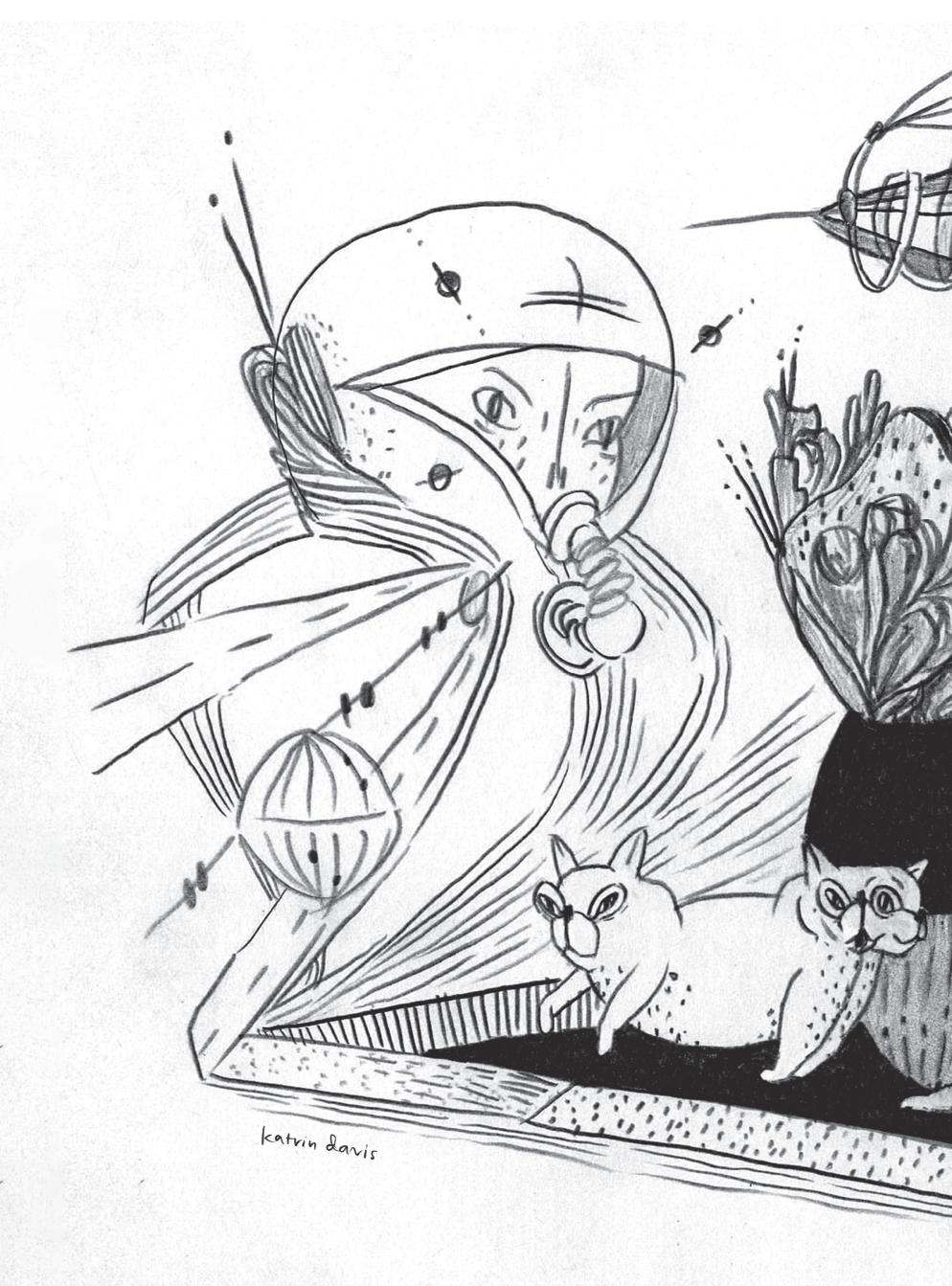
Your work often includes a lot of shapes and patterns. Can you explain your inspiration behind using these forms?

I love patterns because they can be hypnotic and suggest an infinite space. I find anything in multiples to be way more pleasing.

Is there anything in particular you would like for people to take away from seeing your work?

Not really. I like a sense of mystery but with an openness that allows anyone looking to interpret as they please.







**BROTHER** 

You were a boy dog the whole time!

ME

I knew it.

**BROTHER** 

Now we have to abort the puppies.

Teach that mutt a lesson.

**BROTHER** 

Nobody lies to a space pilot's son.

We beat that dog as true as we could, like sons of Dad.

III

And the sun went down, and we were peeking down into a white plastic cup.

Within the cup, two seeds in the dirt.

Within the seeds, apple trees waiting to erupt, so long as we waited and watered. So we did, and we did.

How long?

**BROTHER** 

Not very.

ME

How do you know?

**BROTHER** 

I don't.

ME

So what?

If we aren't patient, they won't grow.

Want to be in space while we wait?

**BROTHER** 

You have to be the astronaut this time.

One day, when we weren't protecting the seeds, something clumsy happened.

The cup - knocked over. Them - spilled to the yard. Us - inside, watching a TV.

Atop the lawn, the seeds must have wondered,

Where have our guard-brothers gone?

My brother must have been wondering something similar because he paused Golf 1994 right at 3 minutes (the good part) to go check them. We bounced outside in slow motion and saw the mess, soil like parched blood around still (stale) bodies.

We saw the seeds for the first time in weeks. They were tiny and shiny, like when they were planted, like when I had picked them from the core of a red apple. They hadn't even sprouted, and with the tip of a cup all our waiting was wasted.

Can't we just put them back in?

**BROTHER** 

No. They're suffocated.

**BROTHER** 

They're dead now, like a spaceman frozen with his mask off.

I still want apples though.

**BROTHER** 

The apples in those seeds are shriveled and gross now. Crouch will buy you some fresh.

ME

I want my own, that I grew.

**BROTHER** 

Crouch is a former Russian space hero.

ME

Still.

 $\Delta$ 

The spill was blamed on a gust of wind until I saw Johnny the dog's nose sprinkled in dirt.

I did what I thought my brother would do. I swung my young limb and cracked my fist across Johnny's head.

YELP

Strong and alone, like a tree bursting out of the apple seed.

YELP

See a world beyond the plastic cup.

Look into the backyard from outerspace. God is a kid-brother, hitting the

Faith is impatience.

**FAITH** 

Dad didn't land on the moon, but someone did, I bet.

I hope. I know.

VI

GOLF 1994:

DAD

I love you.

**CROUCH** 

No.

DAD Come closer.

**CROUCH** This only counts as half.

DAD

Believe me, this will cover everything.

**CROUCH** 

No. Half.

DAD

I love you.

**CROUCH** I know.

DAD

Come closer.

CROUCH This only counts as half. DAD

It's like I'm floating in space.

CROUCH

That's how you're supposed to feel.

DAD

Turn the camera off.

**CROUCH** 

No.

DAD

Come closer or I'm going to fly away.

CROUCH (quietly)

They're going to hear us.

DAD

Then we'll fly away together.

CROUCH

We're not going to fly.

DAD

Yes, we are.

**CROUCH** 

You're high. Just start going.

DAD

Dad?

**CROUCH** 

No.

DAD

Like that?

**CROUCH** 

Yeah. That's nice. Stop talking.

DAD

Or what?

**CROUCH** 

Or this doesn't count.

DAD

It will count.

**CROUCH** 

Not if you keep talking.

DAD

I love you.

**CROUCH** Keep going or you'll fly away.

DAD

Can I have those helmets if I don't

fly away?

**CROUCH** 

Yeah.

DAD

Dad?

**CROUCH** 

DAD

ANDRES PARADA

Dad?

Dad?

No.

## FEATURED AUTHOR

EROTISM: A QUASI-CRITICAL REVIEW OF AMARNA MILLER'S MANUAL DE PSICONAUTICA HILAL OMAR AL JAMAL

I contacted Amarna Miller late last year after learning of her book Manual de psiconaútica. I asked if she would be so kind as to provide me with a digital copy to read and review for Fine Print. She responded enthusiastically, and I proposed an e-mail based interview discussing her photography, writing, literary interests, and another important aspect of her identity: eroticism. A dynamic artist and a voracious reader—she loves Amado Nervo, Pablo Neruda, Alejandra Pizarnik, and Vicente Huidobro—Amarna Miller is an author, photographer, blogger, traveller, and savant adult film actress and producer.

Amarna Miller hails from Madrid, Spain. She studied Fine Arts and specialized in photography and cinema and ran her own production company for several years, an experience that helped her develop her talents behind the camera. Amarna is also a professional writer; she has written articles for the Spanish magazines Playground and Jot Down, among other publications. In June of 2015, Lapsus Calami published her book Manual de psiconáutica, a collection of poetry and photographs in Polaroid format.

Don't let the title fool you, my darling junky intellectuals! Apart from the allusion to Alejandro Jodorowski in the title, there is nothing particularly psychedelic about Amarna's book, at least not in the traditional sense of the word. Instead Amarna shares with her readers a scrapbook that gives us a glimpse at aesthetically and erotically charged memories—a (re-)collection of striking images and found poems pieced together from magazine scraps over several years. In the first few pages of the book, we find a note to the reader: "Aquí está todo lo mejor y todo lo peor de mi vida" ("Here is all the best and all the worst of my life"). The image of a pink silk ribbon around Amarna's wrist in one of the first polaroids (literally) runs through the book, winding through its pages, from the book's beginning to its lovely "fin" (spelled in ribbon at the end of the book). In our interview, Amarna explained that the pink ribbon is an allusion to Ariadne, who used a red thread to lead Theseus out of the Minotaur's labyrinth. Although Amarna insists on the labyrinthine concept at the heart of her work, I see in the image of the ribbon winding through the book's pages a continuity compelling the reader through a young, singular life. I think Amarna would agree that the pink ribbon can also be read as symbolizing a life—and what life isn't labyrinthine—or what I might call a lifeline, figuratively speaking, running from her heart to the veins in her wrist through the phantasmagoria of her psyche projected on the book's interior. For Amarna, this is a deeply personal work, filled only with previously unpublished photographs and found poetry collected over the course of her adult life. As the author puts it:

This book has been a way for me to untangle myself—hence the ribbon. It's my way of finding passage through my own labyrinths, all of my emotions, all of my ideas, all of the things reverberating within me that I haven't been able to externalize. I talk about my infancy, my parents, my family. I talk about memories and forgetting. I talk about sex, obviously. I talk about my work, but it's not a book about porn or sex. I talk about my life, and obviously porn is an important part of it. I talk about my loves. I talk about my lovers.

One of Amarna's most beloved poets is Luna Miguel, the Spanish writer who penned Manual de psiconáutica's perfect epilogue. Luna writes:

Amarna Miller's ribbon is smooth.

Touching it gently heals and also hurts us. Touching it is a magical act through which we learn about her life. Her phantasmal face, some broken toys, the verses she spits, the bodies of those she loves.

"The bodies of those she loves"—love. My beloved friend Quinn Culver—a mathematician with a unique appreciation for Walt Whitman gifted me a paperback copy of Bataille's Erotism: Death and Sensuality two years ago. In the process of writing this piece, it occurred to me that it might be clever to apply Georges Bataille's views on eroticism, transgression, and beauty on Amarna Miller's work. This meant that I had to actually read Bataille's book, which is fine. But as I read it, so much of it seemed sour to me—as sour as the milk in Simone's saucer in *The Story of the Eye*—and devoid of love.

In Erotism, Bataille frames women as gifts in a sexual economy driven by transactions between men who deal in saints and sluts. Women either serve as functions of masculine desire or choose to transgress and ultimately degenerate, sinking to grotesque lows, which Bataille assures us are mighty gross. Reading Erotism is like taking a big sip of, again, sour milk; after you take a gulp, you can't help but wish you could spit it out before it does something bad to you on the inside. Still, I might draw slightly from Bataille in celebrating the transgressive nature of Amarna's work. Despite having certain moments in which her prose and images take on a distasteful Catholic confessional tone an aspect of the text that is relatively well aligned with Bataille's thinking—Manual de psiconáutica as a whole celebrates ecstasy, memory, and a transgressive spirit that is purely Amarna's. Her work captures a femininity that is all her own, one that dares transgress a morality that privileges the hegemon of genders and reduces women to the saint/slut archetype.

### THE FOLLOWING ARE PREVIOUSLY UNPUBLISHED WORKS BY AMARNA MILLER (TRANSLATED BY HILAL OMAR AL JAMAL)

Tú que hablas el idioma de los desalojados: permíteme que te pierda en la suave música que mueve el cielo. El cielo y nuestras piernas largas, piernas que se llenan de viajes nuevos, de fronteras tristes con caminos plenos. Deja la carne quemada y vente conmigo a maullar a la luna al otro lado del fuego.

XXX

Bajo mis pies crujirá la vida, corteza de seda que me trae esperanza bajo las encinas y esparce tu carne morena por mis dedos de rafia. La próxima vez que te vea. Prometo. Regaré tu otoño con mi primavera.

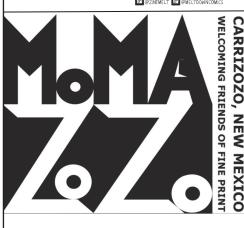
You who speaks the language of the displaced: allow me to lose you in the soft music that moves the sky. The sky and our long legs, legs that run on new trips, along sad borders and broad roads. Leave the burned flesh and come mew at the moon with me on the other side of the

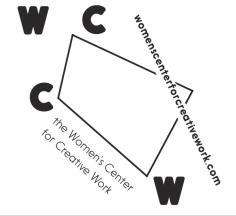
XXX

Amarna Miller's book Manual de psiconáutica is available at: http://LapsusCalami.es

Beneath my feet, crushing life, silken bark that gives me hope under the oaks and spreads your tanned hide through my fingers made of palms. The next time I see you, I promise, I will water your autumn with my spring.







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